

POST OF FORT LEAVENWORTH, KANSAS,

October 11, 1882.

SIR:

As directed by the General of the Army, in communication of September 27, I have the honor to submit the annual report of proceedings and results at the United States infantry and cavalry school here located, from the period from December 1, last, the date of its organization, to the present time.

The school was organized under the provisions of General Orders No. 42, War Department, of May 7, 1881, which provided that the commanding general of the Department of the Missouri should, as soon as the requisite number of companies should be assembled at Fort Leavenworth, take measures to establish a school for infantry and cavalry similar to that in operation at Fort Monroe for the artillery arm of the service. It fixed the minimum of the garrison at four companies of infantry, four of cavalry, and a light battery. It directed the detail of one lieutenant for instruction from each of the infantry and cavalry regiments, fixed the number of field officers at three, and gave general instructions regarding organization and management. No decided action was taken under this order until the fall of the year. Some of the buildings necessary to accommodate the increased garrison were constructed or repaired during the fall and early winter by the department commander, and in November the troops, began to arrive. All the companies had reported on the 25th of the month, and they consisted of headquarters, band, and Companies F and H. Twentieth Infantry; Company H, First Infantry; Company A,

Fourth Infantry; Company G, Eleventh Infantry; Light Battery F, Second Artillery; Troop B, Third Cavalry; Troop L, Fourth Cavalry; Troop G, Seventh Cavalry; and Troop M, Eighth Cavalry; numbering, all told, present and absent, general staff included, thirty-nine officers and four hundred and three enlisted men. Some of the organizations were very weak, but one hundred and seventy recruits received in November and December, and properly distributed, raised the enlisted strength to upwards of five hundred and fifty men,

All of the lieutenants of the infantry and cavalry regiments specially detailed for instruction reported before January 1, with the exception of four, and the last one of the number arrived upon January 25.

From the time of the arrival of the troops until December 6, no orders were issued other than those affecting the permanent garrison. At the last named date Post Orders No. 184 (copy enclosed) was published, This was intended to be of temporary continuance and give occupation until such time as a course of instruction should be decided upon. On December 12, the staff of the school, consisting of Majors Upham and Poland, the first of the Fifth Cavalry, and the latter of the Eighteenth Infantry, and of Captains Williston, Young, and McNaught, of the Second Artillery, Eighth Cavalry and Twentieth Infantry, respectively, they being the five senior officers present, except the commanding officer—were assembled by department orders (copy enclosed, marked 1,) and directed to “propose and submit a code of regulations for the school.” The staff convened under this order and continued its sessions until January 4, 1882. It proposed a course of study and a code of regulations similar to the one governing the artillery school at Fort Monroe. The pro-

ceedings were forwarded on January 9, through the headquarters of the Department, to the Adjutant General of the Army, approved in part, and disapproved in part; but the recommendations made were all part and parcel of a system which required approval in its entirety to make it effective, and, in the opinion of higher authority, it was too advanced and complex as an initiative system for a school of this character. The General of the Army, therefore, in General Orders No. 8, of January 26, 1882 (copy enclosed, marked 2,) issued certain general regulations for the government of the school, and prescribed a course of instruction to be pursued. Soon after the receipt of this order Post Orders No. 34 was published, directing the staff to make classification, as contemplated by the order of the General of the Army. The staff having reported its conclusions, Post Orders No 56, of March 9, was issued and immediately became operative. The last named order taken in connection with Orders No. 64 and 96, shows fully the classification of officers in attendance for instruction, the subjects fixed upon for study, and the length of time allotted for the pursuit of each. Subsequent amendments were few and unimportant, except that in cases when troops were necessarily engaged in labors which suspended drills, the hours of drill were consumed by officers in study and recitation.

On May 20, the staff was convoked, in Orders No. 119, to determine and report upon a plan for the examination of students in the branches of study pursued by them after the termination of the year's course. The main features of its report are appended to Post Orders No. 130, of June 3, which directed the examinations and prescribed the methods for conducting the same. The directions contained in that order were carried out with very gratifying results.

The staff expressed its final deliberations as follows:

The progress of the first class has been entirely satisfactory, and the officers composing it have shown a degree of application and appreciation of the course that is alike honorable to them and deserving of commendation. The following named officers of the first class, having been instructors of the first or second class in addition to their individual studies, and having acquitted themselves creditably, are especially recommended to superior authority: First Lieutenant T. E. True, Fourth Infantry; Second Lieutenant Arthur Williams, Third Infantry, Second Lieutenant W. C. Brown, First Cavalry.

The staff then speaking of a few members of the second class remarked, "How far the shortness of the term, the length of the lessons, the long cessation of regular habits of study on the part of some of the officers, may have interfered with or discouraged them, the board cannot, of course, determine, but admit that it is not improbable that either may have had some effect upon the application to or proficiency in the studies of the officers detailed for instruction."

A small number of the officers were absent from the final examinations, either on account of sickness or absence from the post, and a few were reported by the staff as having failed to exhibit the proficiency which would entitle them to enter upon an advanced course. Both classes are named in Orders No. 173, of July 26, herewith enclosed, and they were directed to review the subjects in which they had failed to acquit themselves satisfactorily. The order last named explains fully the directions given. Upon September 23, the staff was again assembled to examine these gentlemen (see Post Orders No. 224). All were present with the exception of Lieutenant French, Third Cavalry, and Lieutenant Cushman, Sixteenth Infantry, who were still absent sick and passed the required examinations, upon which the staff recommended that they be allowed to proceed with the class of which they had, during the past year, been members, as they had shown considerable improvement since the examinations in June.

The official copy of Post Orders No. 228, of September 29, exhibits the course of study marked out for the present year. The course is not as comprehensive as might be desired, but is probably as broad as the average intelligence of the officers receiving instruction here can master in the period of time allotted for instruction ; and those subjects are included which were considered of the greatest importance to one actively employed and exercising command in our army. * The apparent needs of our service, as manifested by the operations of troops during the past few years, both among civilized communities and in the still uninhabited sections of the country, were chiefly considered in its preparation, and it is believed to be in unison with the spirit of the order of the General of the Army before mentioned, and meets with the approval of the department commander. The practical portion is not detailed but it can be partially inferred by consulting Post Orders Nos. 228, 229, 230, and the previous orders therein referred to. All attached lieutenants are assigned to companies of the command, and all are obliged to be present at tactical exercises and occasions of ceremony. Reassignments are periodically made, interchanging these officers among the different company organizations, so that each has the benefit of considerable experience with each of the three arms of the service. Besides, it is intended, when occasions present themselves, as they undoubtedly will during the course, such as temporary suspensions of drills for purposes of fatigue or on account of inclement weather, to introduce practical instruction regarding the best methods of using the appliances necessary in active field operations in country of varying features, and the period of time between June 1 and July 15, the termination of the year's course, will furnish fair opportunity to apply the higher branches of study theoretically taught.

In establishing the school considerable difficulty was experienced in so regulating the duties of the different organizations represented as to avoid conflict of action, and at the same time to have opportunity for necessary recitations and for the full performance of other necessary duties devolving upon officers serving at a large garrison post. The bringing together of troops of the three arms, and of classes of officers separately identified with each, in order that all of the latter might be instructed in the various matters pertaining especially to each arm, as well as in those which are common to all, was an untried experiment. The process of uniting officers having dissimilar duties of equal duration to be executed within the same and also upon different portions of the day, for purposes of instruction, is in itself quite troublesome, but especially so at this post, which is in a continued state of unrest, owing chiefly to its locality and the transient character of some part of its garrison. Besides, officers and enlisted men were assembled here from different commands and sections of the country. They came with different and antagonistic opinions regarding military life, duty, and discipline, and the attempts which were made to harmonize ideas and action were attended with constant labor. The enforcement of a more rigorous discipline than the majority, of the troops had been accustomed to, made necessary in order to guard against the demoralizing tendencies which exist in the vicinity of old established military reservations of long continued occupancy, caused many trials of enlisted men by courts-martial, in which valuable time of officers was consumed and the work at the headquarters of the post increased. The duties of supervision growing out of a system of instruction, taken in connection with, those of post administration, strictly speaking, becoming sufficiently burdensome to require a division

of labor among assistants, and it being desired to carry out directions to maintain the unity, or inseparableness, of post and school, Post Orders No. 38, of February 15, last, was issued, which created a school secretary with well defined obligations, and fixed the status of all officers permanent and attached in regard to certain hitherto unproclaimed conditions. The methods adopted have worked smoothly and with satisfaction. The time of the secretary of the school has been fully occupied in his duties, and the post adjutant's office has been relieved of a mass of papers and records which are constantly accumulating.

The proper classification of officers for purposes of instruction is attended with difficulty. Some have been recently appointed from civil life, have liberal educations, but slight knowledge of military affairs; others come from civil life, with moderate educational attainments, of whom a proportion have experienced considerable active service in the field, and others are almost without military experience. Again, another class has passed the course of instruction at the United States Military Academy, and some of this class have actively participated with troops in severe campaigns. Both these and a number of appointments from civil life might be denominated practiced soldiers.

All of these officers must be merged, into two divisions. As a consequence, the average ability of the members of the divisions must be estimated, and lessons given according to the estimate fixed. It follows, therefore, that those individuals who have not enjoyed the advantages of fair preparation before entering the school have arduous tasks to perform and cannot grasp or receive the full benefits of the teaching given, while those educationally advanced either in the practically civil or in military branches

can quickly comprehend and assimilate the substance of all subjects taught. Difficulties of this nature, however, cannot be overcome while appointments in the line of the army are made as now, regardless of the early mental training of the appointee, and they must be met here until improvement in this particular is effected.

The advancement of the school has been retarded during the past year by a lack of sufficient post, buildings to accommodate the garrison, and unfortunate losses by fire during the winter hampered our labors materially. Officers and enlisted men have been overcrowded, and recitation and practice rooms have been wanting. So serious has been this want that it has not been possible to establish the ordinary post school, nor schools of any description for the benefit of non-commissioned officers or private soldiers, except those by company for tactical instruction. The buildings now in process of construction will greatly remedy this evil, and it is hoped that by January next not only the officers, but also the enlisted men, will be able to avail themselves of educational advantages. The school, upon its organization, was, also without the resources or appliances for instruction, and without the necessary means to obtain them. The post library existed only in name, and the post fund was merely nominal. At the present time, less than one year later, considerable property in these articles has been acquired, and more beneficial instruction can be imparted. Judging from the results of the brief experiment already made, the school is destined to achieve success, and to accomplish the objects for which it was founded. All connected therewith, and all under whose supervisory authority it has been placed, have exerted themselves for its maintenance and growth. The department commander, ever present, has labored persistently

and most advantageously to secure for it what was needed in buildings and property, and has constantly aided it by counsel and encouragement. Department officers have furnished all assistance in their power, which has proved valuable. The staff of the school, the instructors, and indeed all officers connected with it in any capacity, have, with few exceptions, been animated with the desire to further its interests, and have given unwavering support to the commanding officer. Official relationships have been harmonious in an unusual degree, and this fact has contributed very largely to the success which has been achieved. The school is so organized that it is capable of expansion, and a greater number of attached officers can soon be accommodated and instructed than are now present. Each regiment of cavalry and infantry could have two representatives, if such a detail could be made without detriment to the interests of the service; and by adopting such a regulation, the benefits derived here would be sooner felt by the army at large. That the officers receive much benefit from the instruction imparted, their zeal, industry, and marked improvement sufficiently attest and I believe that when they rejoin their regiments they will make their influence felt for substantial good.

A few experienced instructors are needed, but quarters are already overcrowded, and this fact has prevented the making of a request that more officers be sent here. , As now circumstanced, teachers must be selected, not only from those belonging to the permanent garrison, but also from those who are detailed for, and are receiving, instruction. This falls heavily upon the latter, and deprives them of opportunity for necessary recreation. Last year a number of these gentlemen were overworked, but performed their tasks manfully and without complaint. All the members of the staff are so busily engaged in hear-

ing class recitations that they cannot exercise any general educational supervision, and have but little time to assist in the performance of post duties. In consequence of this inability to render *more assistance in the last-named particular, the commanding officer is unable to give that attention to the subject of theoretical instruction which he considers the welfare of the school demands

E. S. OTIS,

Colonel, Twentieth Infantry,

Commanding.

Adjutant General, United States Army,

Washington, D. C.

(Through Headquarters, Department of the Missouri.)